



Lesson Two: Unit Victim Advocate Oversight

Method of Instruction: Lecture/Video and Group Discussion/Role Plays

Total Time Allotted: 1 hour 545 minutes

Media: Slides 16 – 32
“Date Rape Behind Closed Doors” DVD

Handouts: #3: Checklist for Reviewing Advocates’ Cases

References: Army Regulation 600-20, Chapter 8. Available online at http://www.sexualassault.army.mil/files/AR%20600-20_1%20Feb%2006.pdf.

Courtois, C. (1993, Spring). *Vicarious Traumatization of the Therapist*. NCP Clinical Newsletter 3(2). Available online at <http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/publications/cq/v3/n2/courtois.html>.

Schenk, E. (2004). *You Cannot Touch a Trauma without Being Touched by It: Managing Vicarious Trauma*. Available online at http://www.eastbaytherapist.org/2004/0408_managing_vicarious_trauma.html.

Show Slide 16 (Lesson Title Slide):



Lesson Two Unit Victim Advocate Oversight

1. (10 minutes) Inform students of lesson overview and learning objectives



Overview: Success of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program depends heavily on the quality of Unit Victim Advocates (UVAs). UVAs are key to ensuring that victims' needs are met, advocating for the rights of victims, and coordinating services for victims.

In overseeing UVAs, the DSARC must be knowledgeable of the UVA selection criteria, ensure UVAs understand the responsibilities and limitations of their role, protect UVAs from external pressures and monitor their well-being, and instill confidence in UVAs to work within the system to support sexual assault victims. This lesson will prepare the DSARC to provide UVAs with the training and support they need to fulfill their advocacy duties.

Show Slide 17 (Learning Objectives):



Learning Objectives

- Identify selection guidelines for Unit Victim Advocates (UVAs)
- Describe three fundamental elements of victim advocate oversight
- Explain how to ensure continuity of care for victims of sexual assault
- List at least three ways to help a UVA cope with vicarious trauma

Background for Instructor: Per Army Regulation 600-20, Chapter 8, Commanders are responsible for ensuring that victims have access to a well-coordinated, highly responsive sexual assault victim advocacy program that is available 24/7 both in garrison and in a deployed environment. In a deployed environment, there are two echelons of victim advocates:

- Deployable SARCs--there is one DSARC at each brigade/unit of action and higher echelon
- UVAs—there are generally two UVAs appointed for each battalion-sized unit; however, the first colonel in the Chain-of-Command may approve appointing only one UVA for battalions whose small populations do not warrant two UVAs

Depending upon the needs of the installation, UVAs may also serve as victim advocates in garrison. While in garrison, the Installation SARC will oversee the UVAs in their performance of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) duties, including providing them with the required training, placing them on the on-call roster, and overseeing their sexual assault cases. Prior to deployment, the DSARC should meet with the Installation SARC to determine if UVAs have received the required initial and continuing education training and what, if any, further training is needed. Once redeployed, the DSARC should update the Installation SARC on the UVAs' training status and any sexual assault cases that require ongoing advocacy services.



2. (25 minutes) Presentation Part I

Show Slides 18 - 20 (DSARC/UVA Relationship and Reporting to the DSARC):



DSARC/UVA Relationship

The DSARC:

- Provides oversight of sexual assault cases
- Trains UVAs on how to respond to incidents of sexual assault
 - Ensures UVAs have the knowledge/tools
- Keeps UVAs in their lane
- Protects UVAs
- Monitors the well-being of UVAs
- Assesses UVAs in the performance of their sexual assault duties
- Instills confidence within the system

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Reporting to the DSARC

- The DSARC is the designated program manager of sexual assault victim support services in Theater
- The DSARC is responsible for *systemic issues* while the UVA provides *individual advocacy*
- The DSARC is responsible for overseeing and training UVAs in their performance of sexual assault duties



UVA → DSARC → Command

- The UVA may identify Command-related concerns
- When such concerns are identified, the UVA should notify the DSARC
- The DSARC is responsible for addressing Command-related concerns with the appropriate party
- The DSARC is the UVA's resource for resolving systemic issues related to Command or other first response groups



Read the Statement: “As the DSARC, you are responsible for overseeing UVAs in their performance of advocacy duties while deployed. In garrison, this responsibility is covered by the Installation SARC.”

“The primary difference between the DSARC’s role and the UVA’s role is that the DSARC acts as a program manager for all victim advocacy services while the UVA provides the individual face-to-face advocacy services. The UVA is responsible for *individual advocacy*, including providing support, information and referrals to victims, while the DSARC handles *systemic issues*, such as working with other first responders and the Chain-of-Command to ensure any roadblocks to victims’ services are removed. Thus, if the UVA identifies any safety issues or other Command-related concerns when working with a victim, the UVA should inform the DSARC who will then work directly with the Commander to address this issue.”

“The DSARC is responsible for training UVAs on their role in the advocacy process, including the responsibilities and limitations of their role. Clarifying boundaries and the role of the UVA will be a continuous quality assurance issue for the DSARC to monitor.”

Show Slide 21 (UVA Selection Criteria)



UVA Selection Criteria

UVAs will be selected and appointed in accordance with the following requirements--

- Be recommended by the Chain-of-Command
- Be deployable
- Be able to respond to a sexual assault incident at anytime when on call
- Have outstanding duty performance
- Demonstrate stability in personal affairs (e.g., not have a history of domestic violence or severe personal problems)
- Be required to obtain a waiver from HQDA in instances where the individual has withdrawn from the Human Reliability or Personal Reliability Program in the 2 years preceding the nomination
- Must not have been punished under the UCMJ in the 5 years preceding the nomination
- Must be deployable with a minimum of 1 year retainability in the unit
- Must be appointed on orders to the collateral duty of UVA
- Must be able to attend the SARB as required
- Must complete required initial and annual training



Note to Instructor: The UVA selection criteria outlined on Slide 21 is taken from Army Regulation 600-20, Chapter 8, Section 8-6. The UVA selection criteria is the same criteria that is used for selecting DSARCs, with the exception of the rank/grade required for appointment. The UVA must be an NCO (SSG or higher), officer (ILT/CW2 or higher), or civilian (GS-9 or higher). The DSARC will be a NCO (SFC or higher), officer (MAJ/CW3 or higher), or civilian (GS-11 or higher).

Although the DSARC will not be selecting his or her UVAs, it is important that they are knowledgeable about the Army's requirements for UVAs. The DSARC should utilize this knowledge to recognize, monitor, and respond to issues that could interfere with the UVA providing appropriate and timely services to victims.

Background for Instructor: The following is a detailed description of each of the UVA screen out factors that are outlined in Slide 22.

Victims who are still recovering from a sexual assault: The emotional trauma experienced following an assault may make it difficult for the UVA to remain emotionally objective and demonstrate the stability and presence needed to support a sexual assault victim. The DSARC may become aware of a UVA's past history through an open disclosure by the UVA, and/or inappropriate sharing of their past history with the victim or other first responders.

Sexual assault offenders: It is unlikely that a victim will feel safe with someone who has previously committed a sexual assault. Some former offenders may feel a need to make retribution for a past offense by working as a victim advocate. All former offenders are specifically prohibited from serving as a UVA or as a DSARC.

Individuals with rigid biases: Sexual assault occurs across all sectors of society. UVAs will be working with people who represent different races, socio-economic classes, genders, ethnicities, religions, and nationalities. The effective UVA must be open to working across these differences. In screening out individuals who are not open to such differences, the DSARC should be aware of any statements/jokes that the UVA makes about a particular group of people, any judgments/assumptions expressed about victims/offenders, and/or a lack of empathy to all victims, or victims different from themselves.

Availability: The UVA must respond to a victim within the established timeline when on-call (guidelines for this timeline will be locally determined and should be outlined in a SOP). If a UVA consistently fails to respond to a victim within the established timeline, the UVA's appropriateness for continued service should be evaluated.

Boundary issues: It is important that the UVA stay within their assigned role and not take on responsibilities of other key players. The DSARC should note and respond to any UVAs who become "overly involved" with a victim, fail to emotionally and/or physically separate themselves from the victim, and/or inappropriately go beyond their scope as an advocate. Crossing boundaries may re-victimize and disempower a victim.

Availability: The UVA must respond to a victim within the established timeline when on-call (guidelines for this timeline will be locally determined and should be outlined in a SOP). If a UVA consistently fails to respond to a victim within the established timeline, the UVA's appropriateness for continued service should be evaluated.



Show Slides 22 - 23 (Screening Unit Victim Advocates and Victim Advocate Selection)



Screening Unit Victim Advocates

- UVAs are screened before being appointed on orders to the collateral duty of UVA
- Once UVAs are appointed, DSARCs should monitor and screen assigned UVAs to ensure their effectiveness as advocates. The following indicators are screen out factors and require consultation with the UVA and the UVA's Commanding Officer:
 - UVAs who are still recovering from a sexual assault
 - UVAs who have any history as a sexual assault offender
 - UVAs who exhibit rigid biases
 - UVAs with availability issues
 - UVAs who have boundary issues



UVA Selection and Goodness of Fit

- Disciplinary referrals, retraining recommendations, and decisions for UVA removal are not the responsibility of the DSARC
- DSARCs who observe a UVA exhibiting any of the UVA "screen out factors" should advise the UVA's Commanding Officer of the identified issue
- Victim feedback can prompt an investigation into whether a particular UVA and the SAPR Program are a "good fit"

Read the statement: "Above all else, UVAs must be safe, nonthreatening and empathetic sources of support and information for victims of sexual assault. In order to ensure that all victims receive the same quality of advocacy services, the DSARC must actively monitor each UVA's performance and work with Command to ensure that appointed UVAs meet the Army's guidelines."



3. (25 minutes) Video and Group Discussion

Note to Instructor: The video clip showed during this segment is intended to underscore the importance of the DSARC properly screening and overseeing UVAs in their work with sexual assault victims. In the video clip, participants will see several victims and sexual assault counselors talking about the emotional aftermath of a sexual assault, the long recovery process, and how victims often feel isolated, even from family and friends.

Encourage participants while watching the video clip to consider the UVA's role in supporting sexual assault victims. Remind them that the UVA will often be the victim's only source of support in the months following a sexual assault. Ask them to think about the type of support they will need to regularly provide their UVAs in order to enable the UVAs to support victims.

Show the "Date Rape: Behind Closed Doors" DVD from count 9:06 to 15:48.

After watching the DVD, use the following questions to lead a brief discussion:

1. Based on what you saw in the video, what are some ways that a UVA could support a sexual assault victim?
2. How does being in a deployed environment affect the level or type of support that a UVA may provide a victim?
3. As a DSARC, what are some ways that you can support your UVAs in their work with victims?
4. What steps should the DSARC take to ensure that his or her UVAs are providing quality care and support to sexual assault victims?

Break: 10 Minutes



4. (25 minutes) Presentation Part II

Background for Instructor: The next presentation will focus on the DSARC's oversight of the UVA's cases. The DSARC is responsible for overseeing and tracking the services provided by UVAs to sexual assault victims.

The guidelines for victim advocate oversight outlined in this lesson will provide the DSARC with a general understanding of advocate oversight; however, it should be emphasized that local protocols may vary for each AOR. Prior to deployment, the DSARC should review any SAPR Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the assigned AOR. Such SOPs may contain information regarding established timelines for a UVA's initial response to a victim, transportation guidelines, requirements for the UVA reporting to the DSARC, reporting protocols for unrestricted and restricted cases, and documentation requirements, among other information that may direct the UVA's response to victims. Once deployed, the DSARC should utilize the monthly SARB meetings to review existing SOPs and local protocols and determine if these need to be revised or additional SOPs are needed.

If possible, the DSARC should also meet with the Installation SARC to discuss procedures for ensuring continuity of care for sexual assault victims during deployment and redeployment.

Show Slides 24 - 25 (Oversight of Advocates' Cases):



Oversight of Advocates' Cases

- The DSARC ensures that UVAs provide appropriate and timely services in sexual assault cases
 - UVAs are key to linking victims to services
 - The SAPR Program is only as good as its advocates
- Informal meetings and case reviews must be held regularly
- The DSARC provides UVAs with support, feedback, and guidance on sexual assault cases

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Oversight of Advocates' Cases

The following are questions that the DSARC should use to review UVAs' initial contact with sexual assault victims:

- Did the UVA respond within the established timeline?
- Did the UVA assess the victim's needs and make appropriate referrals?
- Did the UVA provide crisis intervention?
- Did the UVA inquire about any safety concerns?
- Did the UVA explain to the victim his/her reporting options?
- Did the UVA update the DSARC on the victim's reporting choice?
- Did the victim sign the Victim Reporting Preference Statement (VRPS)?
- Did the UVA provide the original VRPS to the DSARC?
- Did the UVA provide the victim with referrals and key POC information?
- Did the UVA ask the victim if he/she would like to receive continued advocacy services?

Read the statement: "A review of all reported incidents of sexual assault takes place at the monthly SARB meetings. However, it is also important for the DSARC to oversee the specific response, care, and services that UVAs provide to sexual assault victims."

Pass out Handout #3: Checklist for Reviewing Advocates' Cases

"This checklist is a tool for you to utilize when reviewing sexual assault cases with your UVAs. You may have to modify it slightly to include local guidelines and protocol. For example, the SAPR Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for your AOR may include information about the required timeline for UVAs to respond to victims when on-call. You will want to ensure that all of your UVAs are following these and other guidelines to ensure that all sexual assault victims receive timely and appropriate care."

"Consider scheduling regular meetings with each of your UVAs to review their respective cases, provide constructive feedback, and problem-solve any barriers that UVAs may be facing. Although it may be challenging to schedule meetings in a deployed environment, consider ways to be flexible and remain in contact and available to your UVAs."



Show Slide 26 (Continuity of Care):



Continuity of Care

- A victim may require a new advocate if either the victim or the advocate is relocated, or if the victim requests a new advocate
- DSARC ensures "warm hand-off" if a new UVA is required in Theater or when victim is redeployed
- For "warm hand-off," DSARC:
 - Obtains victim's consent prior to assigning a new UVA
 - Reassures victim that new UVA can be just as helpful/supportive
 - Contact^{ss} new UVA and briefs him/her on the case
 - If possible, introduces victim to new UVA
 - Requests victim's permission to follow-up with him/her to ensure smooth transition
 - Ensures appropriate documentation and reporting of transfer

Read the statement: "One of the responsibilities of the DSARC is to ensure continuity of care for victims. During the timeframe that a victim is receiving advocacy services, there are many reasons why a victim may need a new UVA (e.g., either the victim or the UVA may be relocated; the victim may request a new UVA if he/she is not satisfied with the UVA's services; or the UVA may request to remove him or herself from a case in which the UVA knew either the victim or the offender prior to the assault). The victim may also require a new UVA or Installation Victim Advocate (IVA) when he/she is redeployed if the victim chooses to continue receiving advocacy services."

"Regardless of the reason, the DSARC should work with the victim to provide a "warm hand-off" to a new UVA or IVA. A "warm hand-off" describes the process of ensuring that seamless, coordinated and continual care is provided to the victim during the course of the transfer. Throughout this process, the DSARC must always remember to seek the victim's permission before proceeding with any of the identified steps, including determining if the victim wants to continue with advocacy services."

Note to Instructor: *The victim has the right to request a new victim advocate at any point. DSARCs should train UVAs that they need to immediately inform the DSARC if a*



victim requests a new UVA, regardless of the reason. UVAs should also be told that it is very normal for a victim to request a new advocate and there are many reasons that they may do so, many of which are no reflection of the UVA's performance.

Show Slide 27 - 28 (Protecting the UVA and Vicarious Trauma):



Protecting the UVA

- DSARC must monitor UVAs' reactions to working with sexual assault victims
 - Working with victims will change the helper
 - Helpers may find themselves suffering from some of the same difficulties as victims
 - Difficulty with a case is not an indication that a UVA is doing a bad job or is weak



Vicarious Trauma

- Hearing stories of traumatic experiences can result in a UVA developing post-assault symptoms similar to the victim:
 - Intrusive imagery
 - Depression/PTSD
 - Intense emotions
 - Altered belief system and world view
- Impact of vicarious trauma may include:
 - Over-identification with victim or victim's case
 - De-sensitization
 - Loss of confidence in the system
 - Inability to effectively perform essential tasks or to provide necessary support to victims

Read the statement: "As the DSARC, you are responsible for protecting your UVAs and helping them cope with the emotional toll of being an advocate. For UVAs who are new to advocacy work, it will be especially important that you let them know that



working with trauma survivors is generally a life altering experience. It is 'normal' to feel outraged, angry, scared, or saddened by what you see and hear from victims."

"However, sometimes a UVA may develop a more profound reaction to witnessing trauma. The UVA may begin to exhibit the same post-assault reactions and behaviors as those exhibited by victims. This is called vicarious trauma. Vicarious trauma develops as a result of the cumulative impact of witnessing or hearing about trauma. UVAs should be educated about the common behaviors associated with vicarious trauma and encouraged to talk to the DSARC about any personal difficulties that they experience while working with sexual assault victims."

Show Slide 29 - 30 (Self-Care for Vicarious Trauma and Advocate Recognition):



Self-Care for Vicarious Trauma

The DSARC should encourage the UVA to:

- Keep perspective
- Recognize his/her limitations and help the UVA set boundaries
- Periodically evaluate his/her work and job satisfaction
- Make changes when needed
- Strive for balance
- Ask for help
- Pursue leisure activities



Advocate Recognition

DSARCs should recognize UVA contributions:

- Provide positive feedback
- Contact UVA's Commander and request to provide positive feedback in annual evaluations
- Public recognition
 - SARB meetings, etc.

Read the statement: "As the DSARC, you need to be aware of the reality of vicarious trauma and consider what systems are in place for an advocate who is struggling with vicarious trauma. Encourage all UVAs to develop a self-care plan and know what other resources are available for UVAs whose emotional needs warrant more attention than a self-care plan, including mental health professionals and chaplains. If either you or the



UVA feels that his/her reactions to the work are affecting his/her ability to perform advocacy duties, advise the UVA's Commander of the problem."

5. (20 minutes) Role Play and Small Group Discussion

Note to Instructor: Break group into smaller groups of 3 for role plays. Tell participants that they will be role playing what they have just learned about the DSARC's responsibility for overseeing UVAs.

For the first role play, each group should identify someone to play the DSARC, the UVA and an observer. Allow the groups 5 minutes for the first role play and then 15 minutes for small group discussion.

Show Slide 31 (Role Play: Oversight of the UVA):



Role Play: Oversight of the UVA

You are the DSARC and are meeting with your UVA to discuss the UVA's recent response to a case involving the gang rape of a 19-year old PVT. During the meeting, the UVA informs you that he/she has been having almost nightly nightmares ever since he/she met with the victim at the MTF. The UVA states that he/she "feels like the assault actually happened to me." The UVA also tells you that he/she has been "talking several times a day" with the victim because the victim "doesn't have anyone else to lean on right now."

As the DSARC, address the UVA's boundaries with the victim and any possible signs of vicarious trauma. Discuss self-care with the UVA and the option for a "warm hand-off" to a new UVA.



Show Slide 32 (Small Group Discussion: Oversight of the UVA):



Small Group Discussion: Oversight of the UVA

1. What are some of the behaviors that the UVA is exhibiting that may be signs of vicarious trauma?
2. What are the DSARC's options for helping the UVA cope with his/her emotional reactions to the assault?
3. What concerns might the DSARC have regarding the UVA's boundaries with the victim?
4. In this role play, is a "warm hand-off" to a new UVA necessary?

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Note to Instructor: Possible answers to questions are in bold.

1. What are some of the behaviors that the UVA is exhibiting that may be signs of vicarious trauma?
 - **Signs that the UVA may be experiencing vicarious trauma include: The UVA is experiencing almost nightly nightmares about the assault; the UVA is internalizing the victim's story and making it his/her own; and the UVA seems overly involved with the victim.**
2. What are the DSARC's options for helping the UVA cope with his/her emotional reaction to the assault?
 - **The DSARC can work with the UVA to develop a self care plan, including helping the UVA set better boundaries with the victim and encouraging the UVA to pursue exercise or other leisure activities that may help relieve some of the UVA's anxiety.**
 - **The DSARC should also set up regular meetings with the UVA to "check-in" and remind the UVA that the DSARC has an open door policy. The DSARC may want to also refer the UVA to a mental health professional or chaplain, depending upon the severity of the UVA's emotional reaction.**
 - **The DSARC may want to encourage the UVA to temporarily take himself/herself off the on-call roster to give the UVA time to work through his/her issues with this case.**



3. What concerns might the DSARC have regarding the UVA's boundaries with the victim?
 - **The UVA appears to be having trouble establishing boundaries with the victim. The UVA is having constant meetings with the victim and seems to perceive himself/herself as the victim's "rescuer." Although the UVA is intending to help the victim, the UVA may actually be disempowering the victim.**
 - **The DSARC should remind the UVA that it is the UVA's role to empower the victim to make his/her own choices. The UVA should also link the victim to other resources and sources of support rather than continuing to encourage the victim to solely rely on the UVA.**
4. In this role play, is a "warm hand-off" to a new UVA necessary?
 - **The DSARC should determine whether a "warm hand-off" is necessary depending upon several factors, including the severity and duration of the UVA's emotional reaction, the steps that the UVA is willing to take to cope with these reactions (e.g., implementing a self-care plan and/or seeking help), and the UVA's own feelings about whether he/she is able and willing to continue to provide advocacy services.**
 - **If the DSARC determines that a "warm hand-off" is not necessary at this point, the DSARC should closely monitor the UVA's progress in resolving his/her emotional reactions, the UVA's ability to set appropriate boundaries, and all other interactions involving the victim. The DSARC's first priority must be to ensure that the UVA is able to provide safe and appropriate services to the victim. If the DSARC feels at any point that the UVA is not providing appropriate services, the DSARC must immediately arrange for a "warm hand-off" to a new UVA.**